

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /073 W

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R 151206Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7857

INFO COMUSFORAZ LAJES FLD AZ

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4763

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, MARR, PO

SUBJECT: LAJES BASE LABOR RELATIONS

REF: (A) LISBON 4052 (DTG 161708Z JUN 76), (B) COMUSOFRAZ
(DTG 041750Z JUN 76)

SUMMARY: MARCELO CURTO'S PROSPECTIVE APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER
OF LABOR COULD MAKE LAJES BASE LABOR RELATIONS A SENSITIVE
ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, SECRETARY OF STATE MARCELO CURTO
SENT A LETTER TO THE AMBASSADOR ON MAY 26 RAISING SEVERAL LABOR
RELATED ISSUES AT LAJES (REF A). AMBASSADOR SUBSEQUENTLY DIS-
CUSSED MATTER WITH PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE (PAF) DEPUTY CHIEF OF
STAFF VALENTE. GENERAL VALENTE STATED THAT LOCAL LABOR
RELATIONS AT LAJES WERE STRICTLY WITHIN JURISDICTION OF PAF.
HE OFFERED TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR HANDLING ISSUES RAISED
BY CURTO'S LETTER. EMBASSY FORWARDED COPY OF CURTO'S
LETTER TO GENERAL VALENTE JUNE 21.

2. AMBASSADOR AND GENERAL WIGLEY HAD OPPORTUNITY FOR FULL
CONSULTATION ON MATTER DURING GENERAL WIGLEY'S VISIT TO
LISBON JUNE 21.

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3. LABOR ATTACHE INFORMED MARCELO CURTO ON JULY 14 OF ACTION TAKEN IN REGARD TO HIS LETTER TO AMBASSADOR. (CURTO HAD EARLIER FAILED TO RESPOND TO SEVERAL REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE.) CURTO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR INFORMATION. HE NOTED THAT MAY 26 MEETING IN HIS OFFICE HAD BEEN ATTENDED BY TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ONE FROM PAF (LT COL ANSELMO) AND HE BELIEVED THIS REPRESENTED A CONSENSUS OF THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS MATTER FURTHER WITH THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE.

4. FOLLOWING INTERCHANGE ON LAJES LABOR RELATIONS, CURTO INDICATED THAT HE HAS BEEN DESIGNATED BY MARIO SOARES TO BE MINISTER OF LABOR IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

5. AMBASSADOR WILL EXPLORE IMPLICATIONS OF LABOR SITUATION WITH GENERAL WIGLEY DURING FORTHCOMING VISIT TO AZORES AND LAJES WEEK OF JULY 18.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS (REF B) THAT LT COL ANSELMO DID NOT HAVE OFFICIAL PAF SANCTION WHEN HE ATTENDED MAY 26 MEETING IN CURTO'S OFFICE. IN VIEW OF REACTION THAT AMBASSADOR AND GENERAL WIGLEY HAVE SEPARATELY RECEIVED FROM SEVERAL SENIOR PAF OFFICIALS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE PAF SEES IT IN ITS OWN INTEREST TO KEEP OVERALL CONTROL OF LABOR RELATIONS AT LAJES. AS LONG AS PAF IS ABLE AND WILLING TO ACT AS A LABOR RELATIONS BUFFER FOR COMUSFORAZ, THIS SEEMS THE MOST DESIRABLE SOLUTION. WITH CURTO'S PROMOTION TO CABINET RANK, PAF MAY NOT HAVE RELATIVELY FREE HAND THAT IT HAD PREVIOUSLY TO DEAL WITH SITUATION AND MATTER COULD BECOME MORE SENSITIVE.

7. ON OTHER HAND, CURTO HAS NEVER BEEN TERRIBLY WELL ORGANIZED. HE WILL HAVE A DESK FULL OF PRESSING MATTERS AS SOON AS HE BECOMES MINISTER. IN VIEW OF HIS APPARENT DISINCLINATION TO DISCUSS MATTER WHEN LABATT EARLIER REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS TO DO SO, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE MAY NOT PURSUE ISSUE FURTHER ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE UNTIL PIQUED TO DO SO BY THE UNIONS.

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8. EMBASSY COMMENDS COMUSFORAZ EFFORTS TO HANDLE RELATIVELY MINOR, BUT POTENTIALLY TROUBLESOME, LABOR RELATIONS ISSUES IN CONTEXT AND AWARENESS OF IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTINUING US ACCESS TO BASE FACILITIES AT LAJES.
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